

City of Cambridge Recycling Advisory Committee

April 8, 2010 – Minutes Taken by Judy Nathans

Members Attending: Rob Gogan, Harvard University; Jarrod Jones, MIT; Randi Mail, Recycling Director; Lisa McMenemy, Casella; Judy Nathans, Cambridge Resident; Adam Mitchell, Save That Stuff; Robert Winters, Cambridge Resident

Guests Attending: Ryan Gray, MIT; Ted Live, Cambridge Resident; Corey Pilz, Cambridge Consumers Council

Market Report

Lisa reported that newspaper pricing has flattened but is still selling strong at \$90/ton domestically and \$100+/ton overseas. Freight for shipping containers increased by up to \$350 each, but domestic movement is steady. This has slowed exports. Cardboard dropped \$30/ton as inventories have built up overseas and demand domestically has slowed. Plastics #1-2 have stabilized with HDPE (milkjugs) selling at \$540/ton levels and both HDPE Color and PET selling at the \$400/ton and \$300/ton respectively. Bi-metals (tin) have increased to \$200/ton. Aluminum is now about \$1400/ton. Both good signs for the economy. Casella is now making pure bales of #3-7 plastics. Overall, Casella is processing 750 tons per day of which 400 are single stream tons from Boston, Everett, Revere, Arlington.

10th Annual MA Organics Summit

Several members (Randi, Lisa, Adam, & Rob) attended the [conference](#) on April 6th which drew almost 400 people. For a limited time, many of the [presentations can be viewed online](#). The event was co-sponsored by MassDEP and MassRecycle.

Randi noted that companies discussing new composting facilities in MA included [New England Organics/Casella](#), [Save That Stuff Organics](#), [Harvest Power](#), [Converted Organics](#), and [We Care Compost](#). Also, the Town of Needham reportedly received MassDEP approval to expand their permit for yard waste composting operations to food waste.

Sessions that Randi attended included: *Commercial Food Waste Composting Technology*, *Digital Media: The 21st Century Town Crier* and *Starting an On-Site Composting Program*. Rob mentioned a presentation he attended, *Biocarbon: What is It?* Both agreed that opening plenary by Roger Guzowski, titled: *How to Perk Up Our Stagnant Messaging* was excellent in making the case to promote recycling as energy conservation and as a tool to combat climate change. This generated much discussion, particularly about the best approach to climate naysayers. In 2007, the [UN declared that the climate debate was over](#) and is

manmade, with the International Panel on Climate Change's 2007 report.

At the *Residential Food Waste Collection* session, Gretel Clark from the [Town of Hamilton](#) presented on the 1st residential curbside food scraps collection in MA. The town hosts Brick Ends Farm, a private composting operation. For \$75/year, a household can subscribe for weekly curbside food scraps collection (which began last month). Nearly 600 households are participating, and are eligible for free finished compost available in the town center. MassDEP grant funds paid for the curbside and kitchen collection containers provided. Randi presented the Cambridge food waste drop-off program for residents, which included a brief overview of composting efforts in Cambridge, planning considerations and best management practices for the food scraps drop-off program, results from user surveys and next steps.

City Updates

- MassDEP released the grant application for the new [Sustainable Materials Recovery program](#), deadline is June 2.
- On May 17th there will be a roundtable meeting with Councilors and City staff on "single stream recycling and related trash management issues".

Recycling Committee Appointments

Randi reminded members that the City Manager is seeking Cambridge residents and local professionals interested in serving on the Recycling Advisory Committee. Active for nearly 20 years, the Committee should consist of at least nine persons with a demonstrated interest in recycling, composting or waste prevention. Members serve three-year terms in a volunteer capacity and are expected to attend monthly meetings (except Jul/Aug) and be willing to work on various short or long-term projects.

Interested persons should submit a letter or email by Friday, April 30, 2010 describing their relevant experience and interest in recycling, composting and waste prevention to: Lisa Peterson, DPW Commissioner, 147 Hampshire Street, Cambridge,

MA 02140, theworks@cambridgema.gov. For more information, visit our [website](#).

Randi hopes to recruit members that represent real estate/apartment management, the business community, the School Dept and others. This effort was partly initiated with the recent Conflict of Interest review and that the City will revisit other committees.

In the past, members have been instrumental in advocating and helping to establish recycling programs in schools, public areas, for businesses and organizing a public forum. There was much discussion about increased involvement and balancing the role of the Committee to both advise City staff and be more active in evaluating programs and identifying improvements and strategies in line with the Department's goals. In addition, members should help set the agenda and initiate subcommittees. Jarrod and Ryan mention MIT's Recycling Ambassadors Program as a model for how residents on the Committee might help outreach to others in their neighborhood.

Upcoming issues discussed include the 2010 MA Solid Waste Master Plan (food waste ban, zero waste goals) and closer coordination with the City's Climate Protection Committee and Climate Congress.

School Composting Update

The School Department recently sent all principals the new [Step by Step Guide to Lunchroom Composting](#), developed jointly with DPW staff. CPS principals and top administrators interested in establishing lunchroom composting should review this guide carefully to understand the commitment required and steps involved for successful programs. Interested principals should inform Meryl Brott at mbrott@cambridgema.gov or 617-349-4836. DPW will develop a prioritized schedule to launch programs based on correspondence with principals. DPW can assist four schools per year, 2 in the fall and 2 in the spring. Fall and spring programs must be ready to begin the planning process no later than October 1st and February 1st, respectively, with a program start date no later than the 2nd week in November and the 3rd week in March, respectively.

In collaboration with Dean of Curriculum Allan Gehant, Meryl helped launch lunchroom composting at the 9th Grade Academy on March 25. Planning began in January and included meetings with the dean, custodian, faculty and students. Mr. Gehant said that the school wide assembly was a great success. Meryl monitored the program with school staff and students for the week and a half.

DPW expects to begin planning a program with the Graham & Parks Principal Sarah Fiarman in fall.

As part of the [Roots and Shoots](#), Jane Goodall will be visiting the King Open on May 4 to speak to the students about their composting efforts and to promote the program in more schools. The entire school community is extremely excited for the visit and support!

Members asked whether the School Department could revisit the report from a couple years ago that compared cafeteria operating costs for three scenarios: 1) Styrofoam and plastic service ware 2) Compostable service ware 3) Reusable, washable dishes. Randi will forward the report to the Committee and has requested a School Dept representative to attend a future meeting to review and discuss the analysis. Ultimately, the analysis found that compostables are less expensive than reusables. The School Dept is continually watching the prices on these items and hope to switch over when they are cost competitive and all items are available.

Suggested Agenda for May

- Tonnage report
- School recycling